November 29, 1945

My dear Dr. Church:

This is to acknowledge your letter of November twentieth, with the enclosure, which I shall make available to the President. May I assure you that your interest in letting him have your suggestion is appreciated.

Very sincerely yours,

WILLIAM D. NASSITT
Secretary to the President

Dr. Charles Herbert Church,
69 Pennington Avenue,
Passaic,
New Jersey.
Hon. Harry Truman  
President of the U.S.A.
White House
Washington, D.C.

November 20 1945

Dear Mr. President;  I see by the papers that you are very much interested in the medical care of our people.

As a practicing physician for over fifty years, whose father was also a physician, and each of us have held most of the medical honors to which we were at all eligible....Presidents of State Medical Societies, National Specialty Societies etc., and contributors to outstanding Medical Journals, I have naturally given considerable thought to the problems and the enclosed is an outline of my solution to the problem.

May I ask you to give my solution real study and see if it is not cheaper, as well as better than the solutions so far advanced.

Every physician knows that the psychological effect of the desired physician's personality is much more important than any drugs he may prescribe in bringing about the recovery of the patient in at least a large proportion of illnesses. My plan keeps that while most plans disregard it entirely for the poor.

My plan also obviates most of the red tape and bookkeeping required by other plans, thus saving money there.

Again, may I ask that you personally give the plan REAL THOUGHT.

Thank you.  

Yours Very Truly  
C.H. Church, M.D., F.A.C.T.S.
HIGH COST OF MEDICAL CARE AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH QUESTION

CHAS. HERBERT CHURCH, M.D.
56 PENNANT AVENUE
MIDLAND, N.J.

Every progressive country in the world is taxing its people large amounts with which to build roads, sewers etc and for their upkeep and for police, fire departments etc for the benefit of all. Every tax payer contributes to these funds, not in proportion to his use of them but supposedly in proportion to his ability to pay. They benefit rich and poor alike. The millionaire with his 5000.00 car which uses perhaps 25 miles of road per week pays a thousand times as much for their upkeep as the salesman driving 1000.00 miles per week. We consider this fair and right.

But which is the more important the roads over which a portion of our goods are transported or the health of the mechanic who produces the goods. What good are the roads without the goods?

Up to the early part of the 20th century we heard very little about the high cost of medical care. Very few half way decent and honest were obliged to go without medical care from the physician of their choice.

If I needed for my patient special advice or operation, I never hesitated to call on first class specialists, and I never remember having been turned down. In my own 50 years of practice I have refused very few calls and had a good reason for refusing these. To a very great extent the same thing holds good today. I would not hesitate to ask our best specialists to see a patient with me and tell them *there is no money in it for either of us* and I am sure few if any would refuse. So it is not the physician or surgeon who is to blame for all this claimed lack of care; it is only in most of the articles which I have seen on the subject, he gets the blame. It is a slander against the REAL physicians and as to the rest, well.........

In November 1938 a Committee of approximately 100 M.Ds, D.D.S., Ph.Ds etc
after five years work and an expenditure of about $1000000.00, reported, among other things a break down of the American Health dollar. This showed that the physician received a trifle less than thirty cents of it, and he seldom refused a halfway deserving patient money or no money, as I have shown above, too he is by far the most important of the helpers. It is his knowledge, his personality, his psychology, the patient's confidence in him personally which contributes much more than half of the requirements, over and above the patient's constitution, for a cure.

WHERE DOES THIS TERRIBLE EXPENSE COME FROM?

It comes from IMPERSONAL, fixed salary laboratories, hospitals, druggists, ward nurses etc, who have little psychological effect on the patient. What are we to do about them? They do mighty little work for nothing. They cant for their expenses are too high. The doctor can work in an extra patient or two for nothing at little or no extra expense, but the others cant.

My solution to the problem is to have all IMPERSONAL WORK financed by the local (or possibly state) government for RICH AND POOR ALIKE. The same as roads, police, fire department etc, including ward care, on the demand of the doctor, and all doctors in good standing be allowed to treat ward patients. Thus every patient could choose his own physician, and every physician could have all of the x-ray, laboratory etc help he needed.

Those desiring private rooms, or special attention of any kind would have to pay for them less what ward care was worth, but GENERAL TAXES would pay the IMPERSONAL necessities.

Is not this a good solution to the problem?

If some insurance or other plan could be worked out by which the physician SELECTED BY THE PATIENT could get a modest fee where otherwise he would get nothing it would be so much better for both doctor and patient. The doctor should always have the privilege of refusing to attend a patient just as has always been the case.
Getting better pay for the doctor, especially from the really poor, would not only be more fair but would be better for patient as well as doctor, for it would allow the doctor MAX to hire his impersonal work done, thus allowing him more time for post graduate work, more equipment etc.

Should the kind of Socialized Medicine now being pushed by many go into effect, there would soon be no physicians of real ability; for any able young man or woman who would assume the work, broken rest, exposure, responsibility etc. required of a real physician, plus the Bureaucratic interference sure to develop, would be a fool, even should he be allowed many times the pay now figured on.

The above plan would cost much less than the $5,000,000,000.00 it is claimed the Socialized plan would call for, with its addition of the expense to employers of keeping all the records and the Bureaucratic expenses.

The whole plan, to my mind, shows how little some people THINK, before rushing into some plan to spend other people's money, or "boss" their lives.